# Co-Teaching Students with Complex Support Needs

Paula Kluth

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- inclusionrules.com
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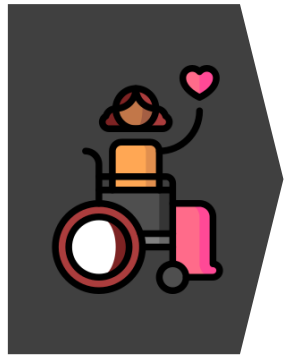


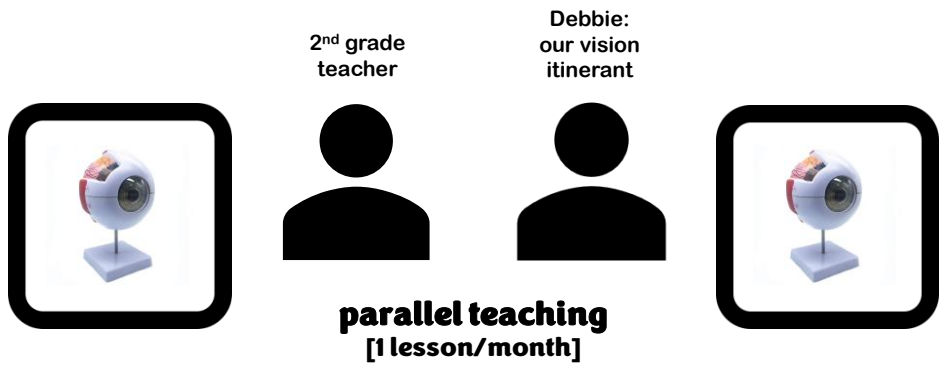
**Are roles different for teachers when we support students with extensive/complex support needs?**

**These situations may require:**

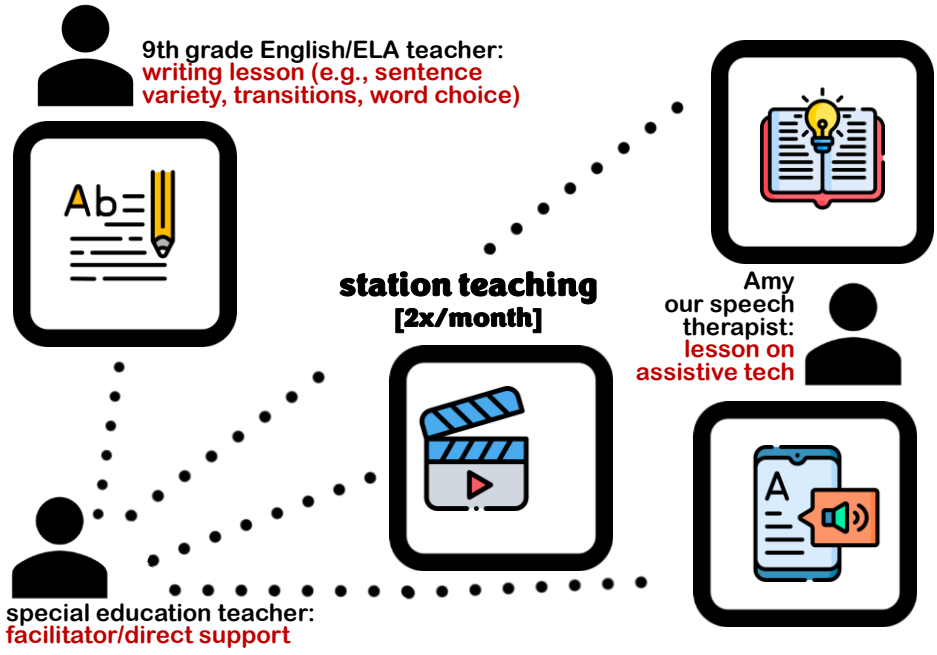
- **more flexibility**
- **more variety**
- **more creativity**

## expand the team

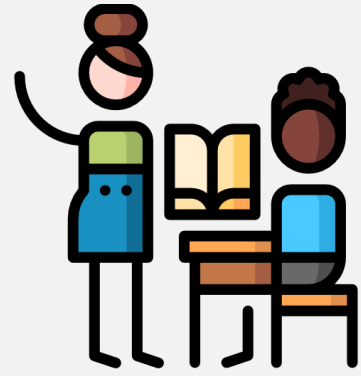
- occupational therapists
- speech therapists/pathologists
- physical therapists
- social workers/counselors
- vision itinerants
- mobility instructors




- use of slant board
- magnifiers
- large print text



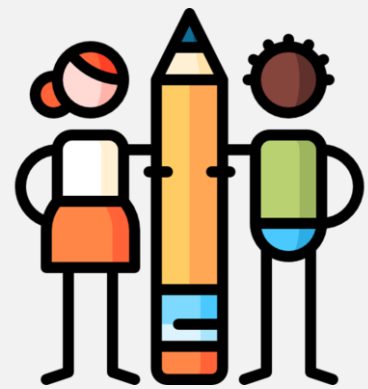

**adapt the structures**

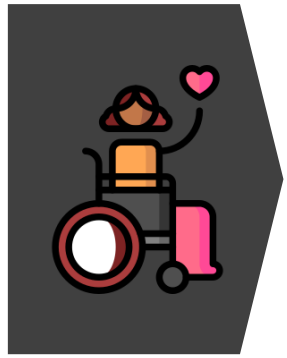


## What types of adjustments might you make?

- one teach/one float or support: float with a purpose
- parallel teaching: uneven group sizes & keep some groups the same
- stations: be creative with student support (e.g., station repetition) & have a "Plan B" for adult roles

## design for all

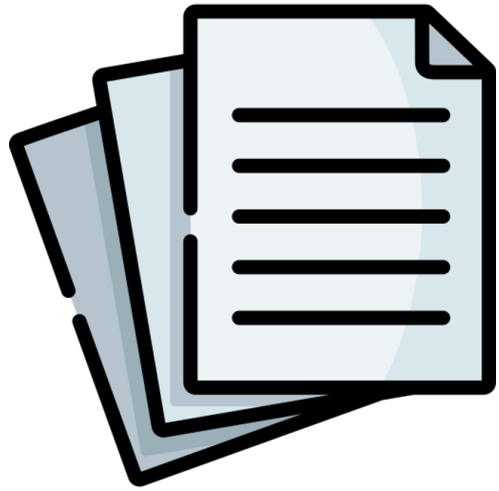




**Are there different considerations for planning when we support students with complex support needs?**

**These ideas are relevant for all, however, they may be especially important for learners with communication, social, and mobility goals.**

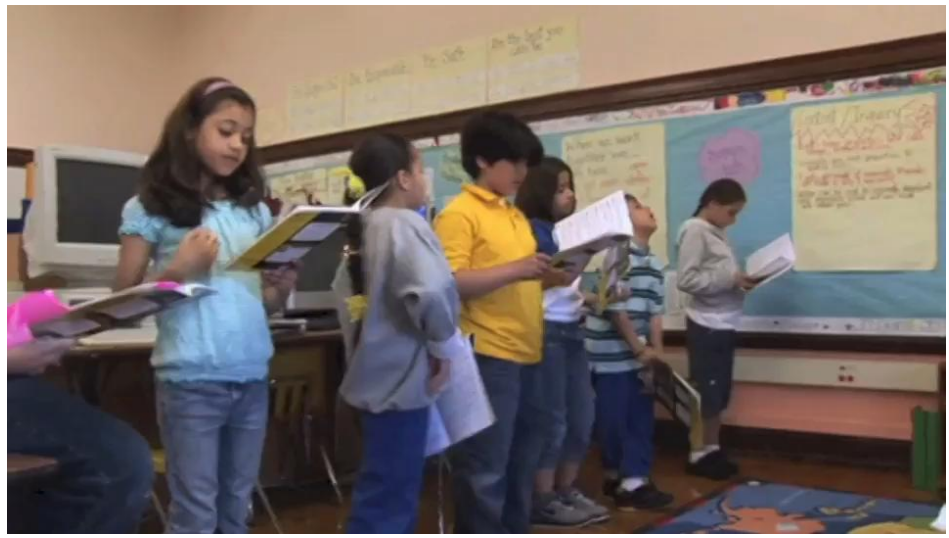
## get it "off the page"



- creates entry points for all
- often easier with two

Kluth & Danaher (2010). *From Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks*. KDP.

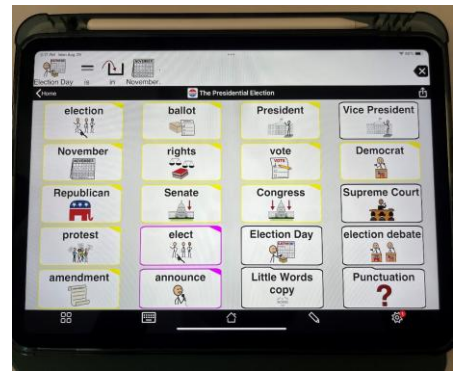
## be clear about standards/targets



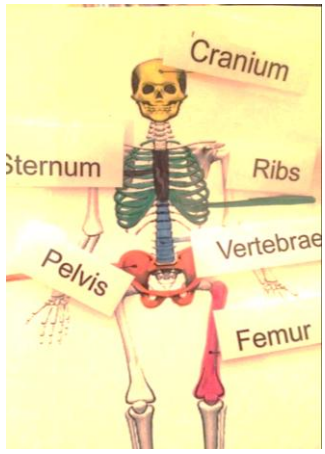
"Evaluate the power and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media."

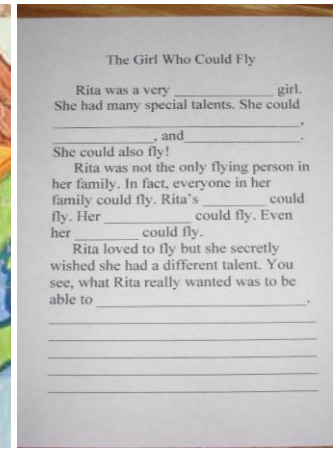
vs.

"Identify 1 or 2 political parties."
&
"Initiate a response to a T question using AAC."



## differentiate demands



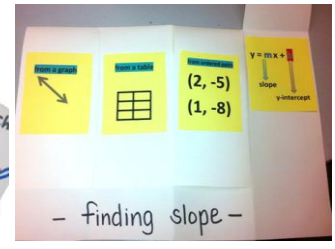


The Girl Who Could Fly

Rita was a very _____ girl. She had many special talents. She could _____, _____, and _____. She could also fly!

Rita was not the only flying person in her family. In fact, everyone in her family could fly. Rita's _____ could fly. Her _____ could fly. Even her _____ could fly.

Rita loved to fly but she secretly wished she had a different talent. You see, what Rita really wanted was to be able to _____.



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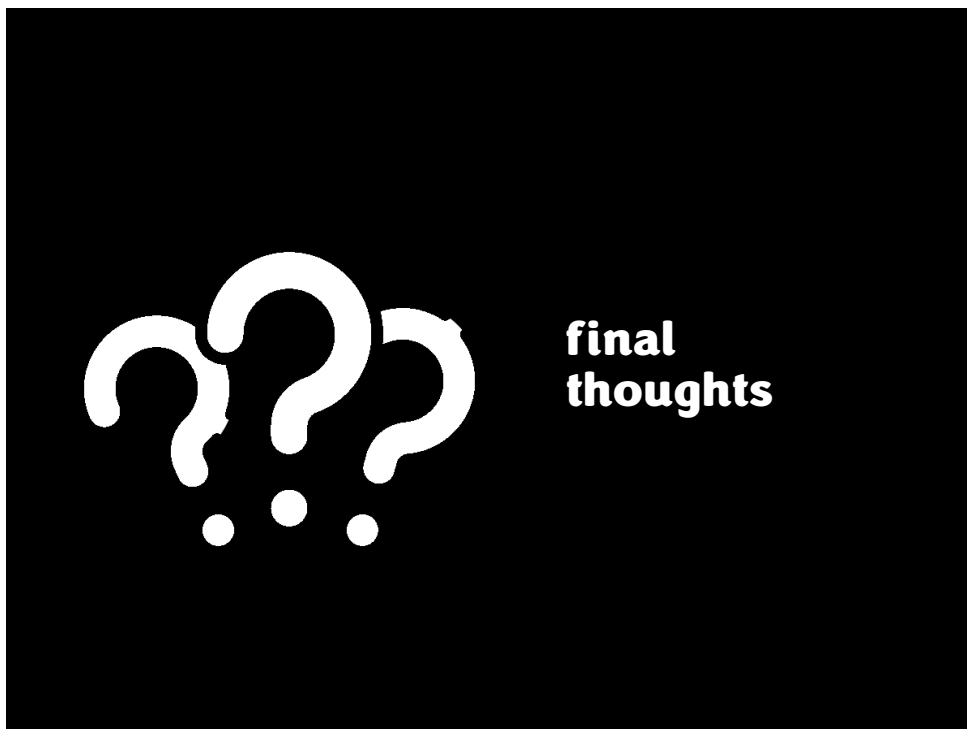
**Sustaining Effort & Persistence** ENGAGEMENT

★ Optimize Challenge and Support

Day 117

## Differentiate Demands

In UDL-focused lessons, all learners need to be challenged, but not necessarily in the same way. Different students may have different learning targets and personal goals during the same classroom tasks; therefore, teachers need to regularly vary classroom demands (CAST, 2024). This can be accomplished in many ways:

- ★ *Differentiate the degree of difficulty in an activity. All students may be learning multiplication at the same time, but some will be tackling single-digit problems while others are attempting double- or even triple-digit problems.*
- ★ *Provide helpful scaffolds and supports. Some students will be able to complete a five-paragraph essay without any tools, and others will need paragraph frames, graphic organizers, and peer assistance.*
- ★ *Expect and allow variation in the performance of skills and competencies. During a unit in physical education, some students will be working on throwing a football just a few feet, while others may be learning to throw the ball to a classmate in motion several yards away.*
- ★ *Emphasize process, effort, and improvement instead of external evaluation. Help students see how their skills are progressing. Work with them to set goals beyond tests and grades.*

**Kluth, P. (2025). *Universal Design Daily*. KDP.**